



History of the Grand Shopping Center

Southwest Corner of 107th and Grand Avenues

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The Grand Opening

January 1, 1960 marked the Grand Opening of Del Webb's new, active adult community, Sun City, Arizona. A golf course, recreation center with swimming pool, and five model homes, awaited visitors – along with a shopping center featuring a fully stocked Safeway Supermarket. Del Webb wanted prospective purchasers to find a complete, new community awaiting them under the warm Arizona sun.

According to the Webb organization, 100,000 people came that opening weekend. Cars were lined up for miles along Grand Avenue. Interest was so feverish, salesmen ran out of order forms and had to use receipt forms from one of the nearby stores. That first weekend, 237 homes were purchased, and Sun City was on its way to become a national success.

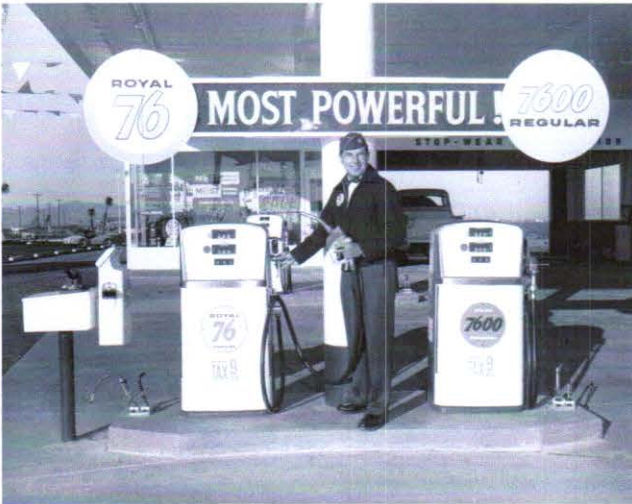
The convenience of local stores added to the immediate attraction of the new community. The story is told that Safeway didn't want to build a store, miles from anywhere in a community with no people. Jim Boswell, owner of the Marinette Ranch that became Sun City, was on the board of Safeway. He was able to gather support from a proposal from Webb to build a store, and offer it rent-free until a certain sales volume was reached. As part of the deal, Safeway was given first refusal on future grocery stores in Sun City. As a result, Safeway was ready with fully stocked shelves, fresh produce, and a meat department on Day One!



A fully stocked Safeway greeted visitors. Steve Hornacek (left) managed the store for some 20 years and lived in Sun City.



Mr. and Mrs. Greenway ran the drug store. He was the pharmacist, and wife Barbara (above) did the buying for the gift section.



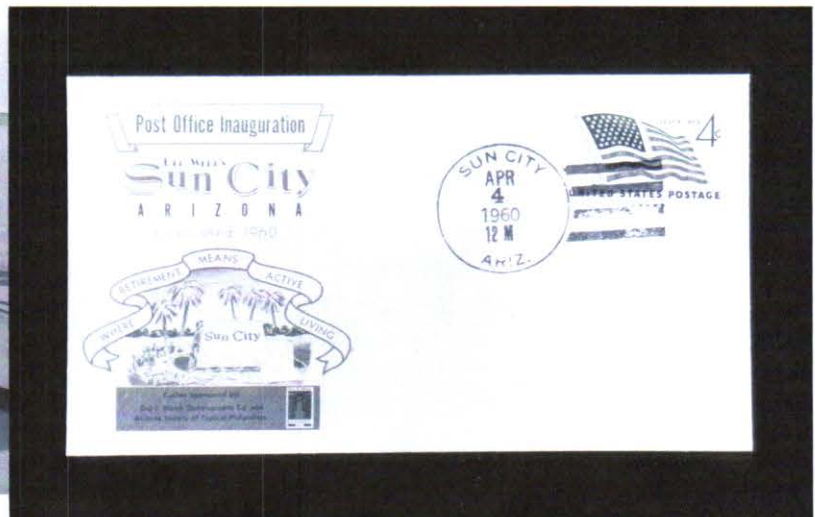
Signs of value in 1960. Gas was 25.9-cents per gallon for regular, 28.9 for premium.

New Year's Day also marked the opening of a Del Webb Highway House and Motor Hotel (later known as King's Inn) just east across 107th Avenue. It gave prospective purchasers a place to stay while they "tried out" the new community.

Originally named the Sun City Shopping Center, the center soon became a beehive of activity. The supermarket was followed on March 4 by the TG&Y Variety Store. Two weeks later, Greenway Drugs and the Desert Barber Shop opened for business. Others soon followed including Steven's Beauty Salon, "One Hour Valet" cleaning and launderette, a Union Oil service station, and Berridge Nursery. While there was no house-to-house mail delivery, the U. S. Post office opened a Sun City contract sub-station on April 4th to great fanfare.



Mary Garretson receives the key to the new facility from the Phoenix Postmaster



First-Day cover for the opening of the new post office.

Later in the year, the new Sun City Medical Center building opened behind the shopping center on Oakmont Drive. It housed the office of Dr. Robert M. Stump and provided temporary quarters for a branch of the First National Bank. While the two “roof mates” were noncompetitive in a business sense, they did have to compete for use of their common restroom.

Expansion of the Center

Plans for an expansion were started almost immediately, and a second “Grand Opening” occurred on April 6, 1961. Along with it came a new name: The Grand Center. Three days of ceremonies included entertainment, contests, and gifts. Second year volume was predicted to be \$4-million, most of it business new to the Arizona economy thanks to the increasing influx of a new class of residents – the retired and semi-retired.

With some 70,000 sq. ft. of leasable space, news reports praised the Grand Center as “the largest shopping center in Arizona, outside of Phoenix!” Business was good, too, at the nearby Union Oil service station whose gasoline sales soared into the list of top-10 stations in the greater Phoenix area.



On the final day of celebration, Otto Martin won the grand prize – a Wurlitzer organ.

The addition made room for a hardware store, a liquor store, and a delicatessen. It also permitted a drapery shop known as Baer’s of Sun City to expand into a full-fledged furniture store after buying out Brown’s of Glendale. Baer’s was sold in 1972 to Henry S. Freed who opened Freed’s Fine Furnishings. Two years later, Freed expanded his store into an additional 8,000 square feet of space

The Center’s expansion in 1961 also marked the opening of the First National Bank building as it moved from its temporary home to a new location along Grand Avenue. According to JUBILEE, the First National Bank’s appearance in Sun City was no coincidence.

Back in the mid-thirties, Del Webb needed working capital and applied for a loan at a Valley bank – but was turned down. First National, however, believed in the young contractor and granted the loan. For years the two prospered together as Webb’s construction business hit the big time with his winning of a government contract to build Luke Air Force Base.



The new First National Bank of Arizona building on Grand Avenue with Grand Center in the background.

In the summer of 1961, the center experienced its first business failure. Maurman’s Jewelry failed to open one Monday morning when the owner didn’t show up. He had left in the night, and it’s believed his creditors never collected a cent.

A Newspaper Calls Grand Center Home

In April 1960, Burt and Ursula Freirich purchased the biweekly *Youngtown News* and *Sun City Sun* from Mr. and Mrs. Syd Lambert. As they waited for space in the expanded shopping center, they published the first issues of the *News-Sun* from the Lambert’s back porch. “We didn’t even have a phone,” Freireich recalled. Shortly after, he received a call from Mountain Bell asking if he was happy with the new telephone booth the company had installed. “What booth?” Freireich asked. “Well, the one the *News-Sun* called about. You said you needed a public phone in the shopping center so we installed one.” Freireich never did find out who used his name.

After the expansion was completed, the *News-Sun* moved into space opposite the Post Office where the paper was published weekly.

Grand Center Gets a Radio Station

In June 1962, the 1000-watt radio station, KTPM-FM, began broadcasting from the Grand Center. Its studios were in the shopping center and shoppers passing by could look in through a large window to view broadcasting taking place.

Unfortunately, the station only lasted six months, and it wasn't until March 1975 that Sun City had another radio station. The 3,000-watt KWAO-FM, owned by three men from Harrisburg, PA, was 100% community-oriented. In 1983, the station was purchased by Canyon Communications and became KMZK, a light rock music station. The local studios were vacated, and broadcasts are made from Glendale. In following years, the station changed hands several times, and currently is KOMR, a Hispanic station at 106.3 on the radio dial. Over the years, the tower grew in height from its original 150-feet to 400-feet today.



Shoppers at Grand Center could look in on Announcer Otto Highfield of KTPM-FM as they passed by. Note the long-playing, 33-1/3 rpm record album in Highfield's hands.

From a Del E. Webb Development Report (Circa 1976):

SUN CITY, ARIZONA
Grand Shopping Center No. 1

Location: Southwest corner of 107th Ave. and Grand Ave.
 Acreage: Original Center 4.42
 First Addition 8.35
 Nursery 1.78
 14.55

Description: Single story Shopping Center containing 70,727 sq. ft. of gross leaseable area.

History: The original center was opened in January 1960. The first addition was opened in March 1961 and the Nursery was added in September 1966. The façade was remodeled in late 1973.

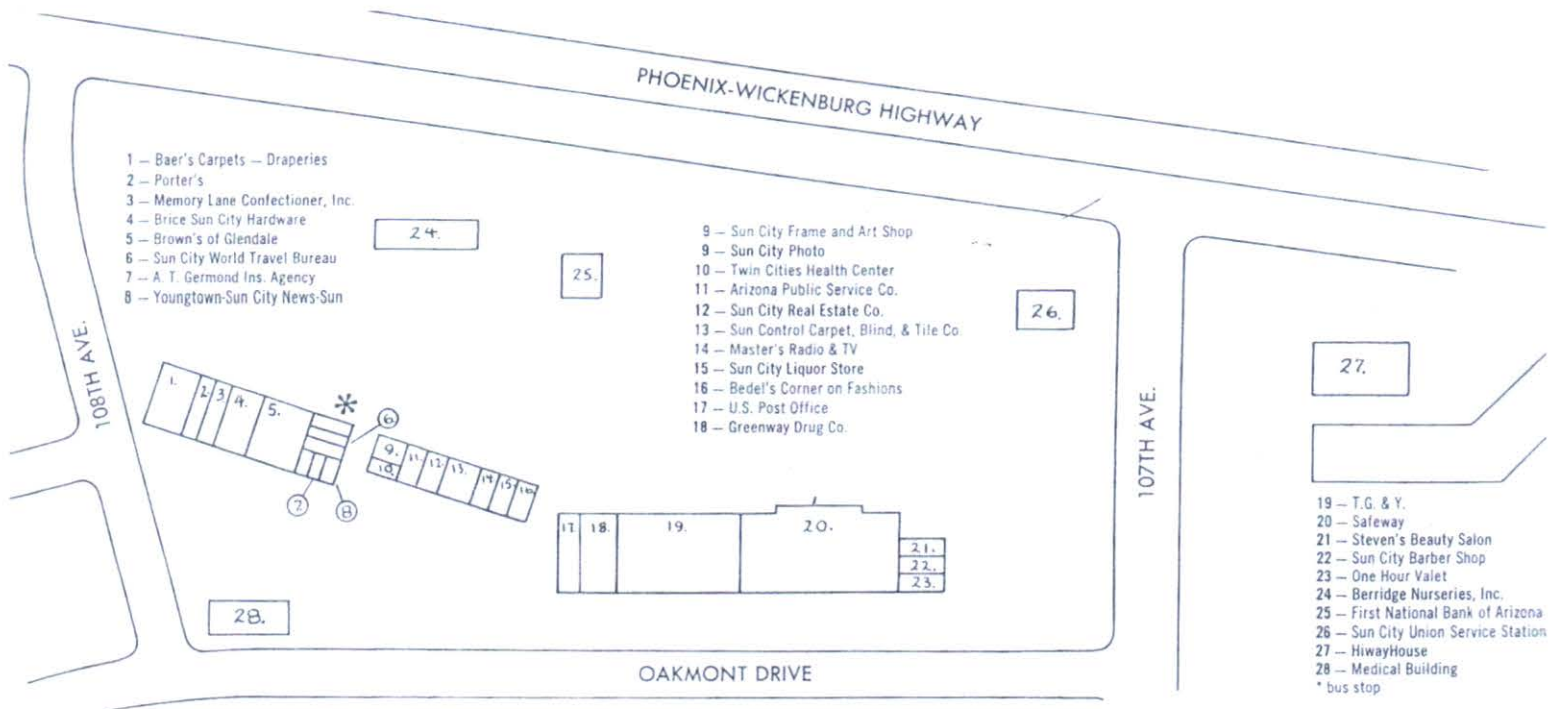
Zoning, Evaluation, Current status and Future Plans: Commercial 2 (C-2). Medium restrictive value. Obtained for sales, service and amusement uses. The Maricopa County Fair Market Value, Assessed Valuation, and Taxes for the years indicated, are:

1972	\$ 762,145	\$ 190,535	\$ 14,462
1973	731,062	177,065	12,102
1974	1,057,621	277,640	24,155
1975	1,057,621	277,640	21,128

Property is currently 100% leased. No future change is contemplated.

Principals: Del E. Webb Development Co. – Owner
 Nineteen business firms – Tenants

Date Acquired: January 1960
 Purchase Price: \$373,457 (Original Center Cost)
 Book Value: Land \$ 21,933
 Land Improvements 34,308
 Buildings and Structures 1,037,066
 \$ 1,083,307
 Less Depreciation 436,117
 NET BOOK VALUE \$ 657,190



Grand Center Directory from mid-1960s.

"Sun City's Oldest Business to Close Nov. 9"

So read the headline in the Oct. 17, 1985 DAILY NEWS-SUN. After 26 years, the Safeway store's small size got in the way of progress. With 18,000 sq. ft., the Grand Avenue store was less than half the size of the new Safeway stores being built at the time. With the space limitations, it was impossible for the store to stock all the merchandise found elsewhere. Actually, Safeway had announced plans to close the store four years earlier, but so many Sun Citians wrote letters and complained that officials decided to keep it open.

After closing, the store was converted to a Liquor Barn. In 1988, the Liquor Barn franchise was purchased from the Safeway chain.

Two Other Major Stores Announce Closings

Four years after Safeway closed, the Liquor Barn and TG&Y announced on July 3, 1989, that they would close on July 20.

The Liquor Barn moved to an expanded location in the Mercado del Sol Shopping Center in Sun City West where it opened under the name of Newman's Marketplace. A full-service deli was planned, along with discounted wine, beer, and liquor.

TG&Y was closed because its parent company, McCrory's, recently opened a Newberry's store at Arrowhead Mall. TG&Y and Newberry's were two of the ten five-and-dime chain stores operating nationwide under the McCrory's banner. Management felt it didn't make sense to have two virtually identical stores operating within three miles of each other. The Arrowhead Mall was seeing better business than the TG&Y.

As Bob Waters – operator of the postal station -- told it, women were beside themselves when TG&Y left. "They were heartbroken. They didn't know what to do," he said. "They could go in there with \$5 and spend half the day."

1990 – Low Point for Grand Center

By June 1990, nearly half the center's stores had closed and stood empty. The center was now owned by the Teachers Retirement System of Texas that had been the lender to the former owner, Zane May. May had lost Grand Center and five other shopping centers through foreclosure. CBS Properties was handling the search for new tenants. There was hope of a new restaurant opening in the old Melody Lane space, as that would bring people to the center.

When the King's Inn was torn down to make room for a shopping center with a Smith's food store, rumors spread that Grand Center would be razed to make room for a hotel. That was followed by the rumor that the center would give way to a Target store. But, neither was true.

The opening of Smith's did benefit some Grand Center businesses. Chuck Tompkins, who ran the Sun City Barber Shop, reported "Smith's was bringing lots of younger people into the area. I used to only have gray hair left on the floor." Leila Moore, who ran the Gilbert Ortega Jewelry store, said her business had picked up in recent months. "But, part of our problem is that we have a row of banks fronting Grand, and people can't see that we're here," she said.

"New Stores Help End Doldrums"

Arizona Republic, Nov. 19, 1990

CBS Properties announced that five new tenants had signed lease agreements in the Grand Center. Construction workers were busy remodeling the former 16,662 sq. ft. Liquor Barn space, readying it for the opening of an Old America Store before Christmas.

Two new tenants had already opened in the center. Erika's Naughty Nails and Hair moved to the center on Oct. 30. They had a store on 98th and Bell, and decided Sun City could use another location. The nail salon occupied the former Sun City Beauty Salon.

A second salon, Aztec West, opened Nov. 7 in the space formerly occupied by Sun City Optical. The shop moved from a location at 99th and Olive avenues. The amount of available parking space is what drew them, according to the owner.

Other future tenants include a restaurant and a Sears, Roebuck and Co. home appliance and catalog store. The restaurant would occupy the former Melody Lane space, and it, too, hoped to be open before yearend.

The Sears store was going into the 5,560 sq. ft. space that had previously held the Greenway Drugstore. The store would have a number of household items -- television sets, refrigerators, washers, and dryers -- on display, and customers could purchase them or order from the catalog. A Sears spokesman felt Sun Citians would really appreciate the new store, as they wouldn't have to drive to Westridge or Metrocenter malls to shop at Sears

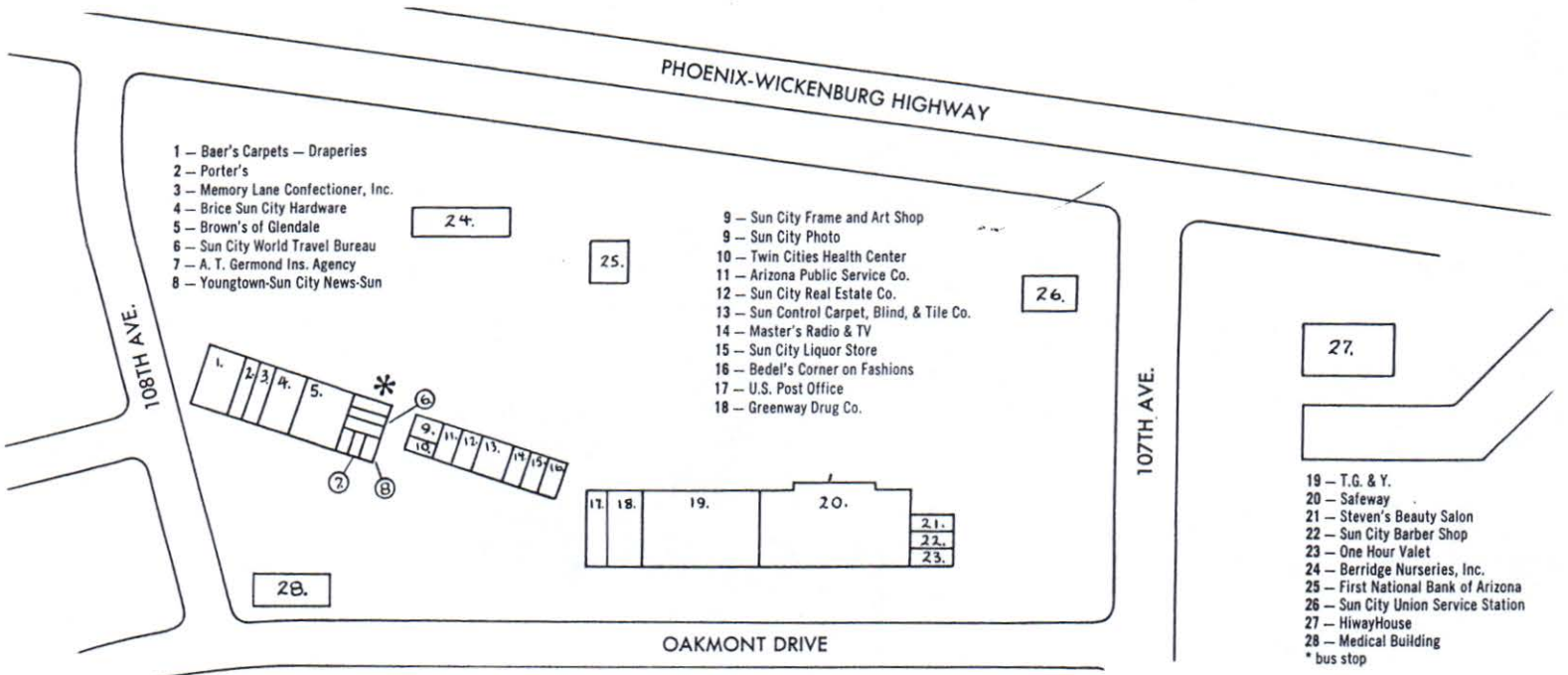
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A part of the attraction for the new tenants was the plan that the center owners announced a remodeling of the front of Grand Center. More than \$250,000 was spent to replace the roof, put up a new marquee, remodel, repaint, and refurbish the entire property.

A little over a year later, the center had a smart new look, and was 95% full. Beall's Clothing Outlet Store was the most recent opening, occupying the TG&Y store that had stood empty for nearly three years. Another welcome addition was J.P. Sousa's restaurant. It opened in 1991 in the former Melody Lane location.

The cycle of openings and closures continued over the years. In February 1993, Sears announced it would close more than 100 stores and discontinue its catalog business. The news shocked Sun Cities area customers. The loss of the convenience of selecting items from the

catalog at home, and calling orders in was difficult to accept. But it wasn't just Sun City residents that were affected – nationwide, people mourned the loss of the Sears catalog.

Over the years, many other changes have taken place within the Grand Center and the surrounding area. The Center performed a key role in the successful launch of the world's first active adult community, and nearly 50 years later, continues to serve Sun City area residents.



Welcome!



Welcome to your Sun City Shopping Center! In this convenient center you'll find everything you need from food to fashions, from housewares to hobbies, from toiletries to television, from flowers to ice cream . . . every possible need you'll find at Sun City Shopping Center. And always it's a pleasure to make shopping pleasant

DOUBLING
its Size

DOUBLING
its Service

Sun City

**SHOPPING
CENTER**

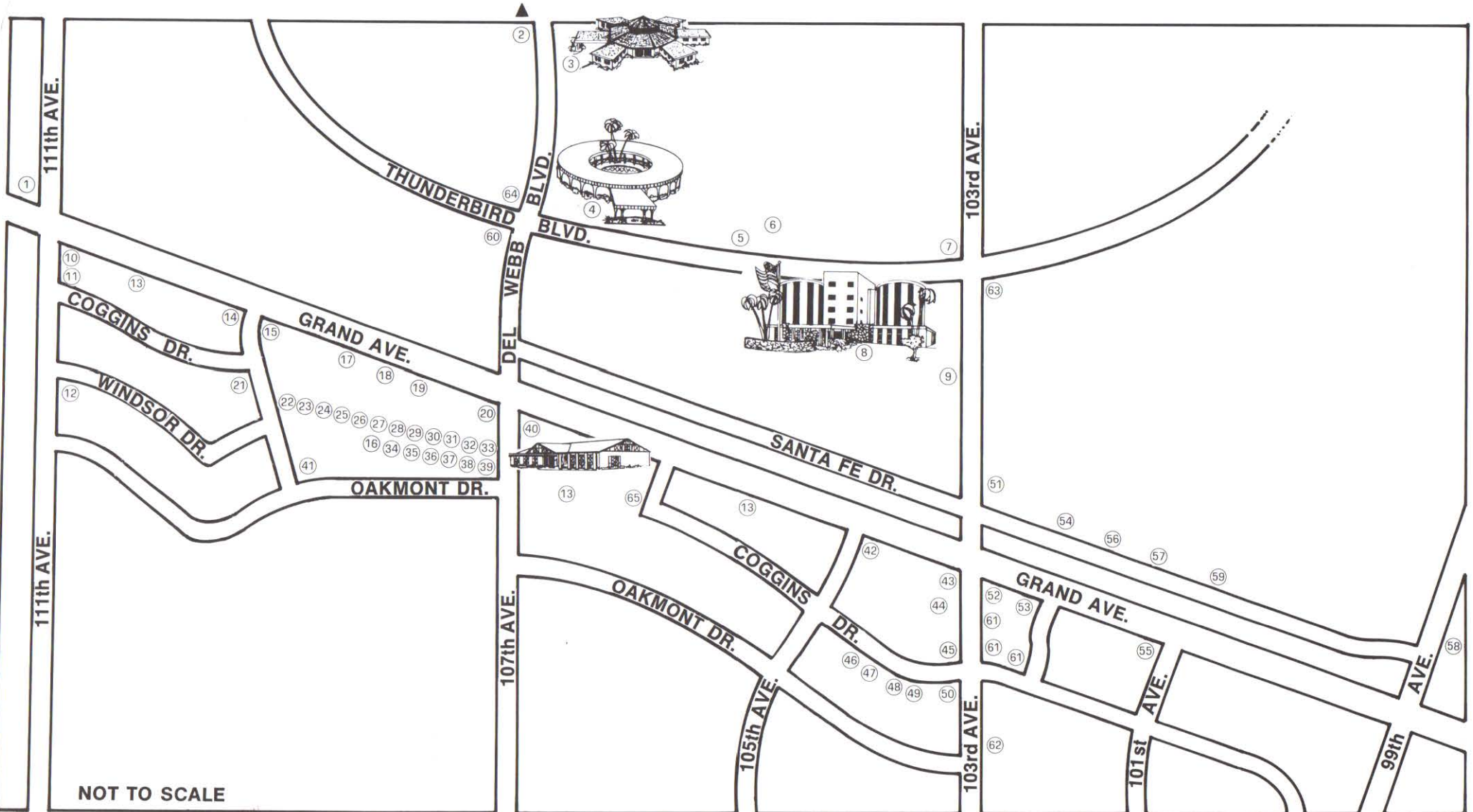
***Offers Complete,
One-Stop Convenience
for All Your Needs***

**WITH THESE FINE
RETAIL STORES
AND SERVICES**

Arizona Public Service Co
Baer's Draperies
Berridge Nursery, Inc.
Brice Sun City Hardware
Brown's Furniture Store Co.
First National Bank
Greenway Drug Co.
Masters T.V.
Maurman's Jewelry
News-Sun Newspaper
One Hour Valet
Safeway Store
Stevens Beauty Salon
Sun City Barber Shop
Sun City Liquor Store and
Delicatessen
Sun City Travel Bureau
Sun Control Blind & Carpet
T. G. & Y. Variety
Twin City Health Center
Union Oil Service Station
Del Webb's HiwayHouse
Motor Hotel

**LOCATED AT THE
GRAND AVENUE ENTRANCE
TO SUN CITY**

GRAND AVENUE MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY MAP



NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND—GRAND AVENUE MERCHANTS

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Sun City Stadium | 18 Western Savings & Loan | 35 T G & Y | 52 Exxon Service |
| 2 Sun City Water & Sewer Co. | 19 First National Bank | 36 Safeway | 53 Howard Johnson Restaurant |
| 3 Del Webb Sales Pavilion | 20 Sun City Union Service | 37 Sun City Beauty Salon | 54 Chrysler Test Station |
| 4 Lakeview Recreation Center | 21 McClellan's Nursery | 38 Sun City Barber Shop | 55 Kentucky Fried Chicken |
| 5 Lakeview Lanes | 22 Melody Lane Restaurant | 39 Sun City Grand Avenue Cleaners | 56 Del Webb Property Management Bldg. (Site) |
| 6 Lakes Club | 23 Baer's of Sun City | 40 Kings Inn | 57 Sun City Animal Hospital |
| 7 Valley National Bank | 24 Emily's Womenswear | 41 Sun City Medical Center | 58 Del Webb Construction Yard & Office |
| 8 Boswell Memorial Hospital | 25 Law Offices | 42 City Bank | 59 News Sun Building |
| 9 Lakeview Medical Arts Center | 26 Zuhl Jeweler | 43 Venable ARCO Service | 60 Thunderbird Bank |
| 10 Gulf Service | 27 Hollett of Arizona | 44 Circle K | 61 Medical Buildings |
| 11 Harry's Golf Car Center | 28 Jean's Sportogs | 45 Sun City Professional Building | 62 Sun Valley Lodge |
| 12 Fire Station | 29 Hunters Books | 46 Sun City Homeowners Association | 63 Texaco Service |
| 13 Vacation Apartments | 30 Del Webb Realty | 47 Oahu Music Company | 64 Mobil Service |
| 14 Sunowner Restaurant | 31 Dr. John Kay, Optometrist | 48 Germond Insurance Building | 65 Sun City Ticket Office |
| 15 Greater Arizona Savings & Loan | 32 Sun City Liquors | 49 Sunshine Service Building | |
| 16 Sun City Travel Service/Greyhound Bus | 33 Bedel's Corner on Fashions | 50 U.S. Post Office | |
| 17 Arizona Public Service | 34 Greenway Drug & Gifts | 51 Snyder Transfer & Storage | |

Compliments of the Grand Avenue Merchants' Association